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A METHOD FOR SELECTING AN OPERATING MODE FOR A FRAME-BASED
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

15 A method for selecting an operating mode for a frame-based
communications network consisting of a plurality of stations
attached to a transmission medium. The plurality of stations
10 include both a first type station and a second type station. The
first type station is capable of transmitting and receiving first
protocol frames in accordance with a first protocol. The second
type station is capable of transmitting and receiving both first
protocol frames and second protocol frames in accordance with a
15 second protocol. The first protocol and the second protocol each
use different signals on the transmission medium. The first type
station is not capable of reliably detecting second protocol
frames. The first protocol has a first protocol frame format
containing at least two reserved bits in a first protocol frame
20 header which are ignored in received frames by first type
stations and always sent with a same fixed value by first type
stations. The first protocol frame format is redefined to provide
an updated first protocol frame header wherein two reserved bits
in the first protocol frame header are allocated as a mode
25 selection indicator field in the updated first protocol frame
header. The mode selection indicator field has meaning for second
type stations.

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